

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (previously presented) A computerized method for managing a plurality of mobile assets using information indicative of actual usage of each asset, the method comprising:

collecting data regarding each of a plurality of mobile assets;

providing a set of rules comprising relationships for processing the collected data to determine a plurality of operational modes for each asset, each of said operational modes being associated with a distinct level of wear in an asset;

processing the data relative to the set of rules to develop historical information regarding actual usage of each mobile asset, the information for said actual usage being arranged so as to list a plurality of operational modes accumulated for the asset over a selectable period of time; and

distributing the information via a global information network.

2. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein said historical information regarding actual usage of the asset is enhanced with environmental data collected during the actual usage of the asset, with said environmental data comprising at least one environmental parameter contributing to the level of wear of said asset.

3. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising determining a service recommendation for each respective mobile asset based on the actual usage of said respective mobile asset.

4. (previously presented) The method of claim 3 further comprising communicating said service recommendation to an operator of the mobile asset.

5. (previously presented) The method of claim 4 wherein said service recommendation includes suggesting a service center able to perform said service recommendation.

6. (previously presented) The method of claim 5 wherein the suggested service center is based on the position of the mobile asset relative to said service center.

7. (previously presented) The method of claim 6 wherein the suggested service center is further based on whether said service center is part of a chain of preferred service centers.

8. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of distributing information further comprises:

linking a data center to the global information network;

linking a service center for the mobile assets to the global information network; and

posting a recommendation for a service activity for one of the plurality of mobile assets on a web site accessible via the global information network.

9. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
collecting data regarding cargo being transported by the respective mobile assets;

using the data regarding cargo to develop information regarding the cargo;  
and distributing the information regarding cargo via the global information network.

10. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising:  
collecting data regarding respective service functions provided through a  
respective one of the remote assets;  
using the data regarding the respective service functions to develop  
information regarding said functions; and  
distributing the information regarding said service functions via the global  
information network.

11. (previously presented) The method of claim 10, further comprising:  
developing a web site including a respective web page including  
information regarding the service functions performed for each one of a  
respective plurality of customers; and  
providing access to the respective web pages via the global information  
network to the respective plurality of customers.

12-14. (cancelled)

15-19. (cancelled)

20. (previously presented) A computerized method for managing a plurality of mobile assets using information indicative of actual usage of each asset, the method comprising:

- collecting data regarding each of a plurality of mobile assets;

- providing a set of rules comprising relationships for processing the collected data to determine a plurality of operational modes for each asset, each of said operational modes being associated with a distinct level of wear in an asset;

- processing the data relative to the set of rules to develop historical information regarding actual usage of each mobile asset, the information for said actual usage being arranged so as to list a plurality of operational modes accumulated for the asset over a period of time;

- using the historical information to develop a failure prediction for at least one of the plurality of remote assets; and

- distributing the information via a global information network.

21. (previously presented) A computerized method for managing a plurality of mobile assets using information indicative of actual usage of each asset, the method comprising:

collecting data regarding each mobile asset of a plurality of mobile assets that together constitute a mobile asset system;

providing a set of rules comprising relationships for processing the collected data to determine a plurality of operational modes for each asset, each of said operational modes being associated with a distinct level of wear in an asset;

processing the data relative to the set of rules to develop historical information regarding actual usage of each said mobile asset, wherein said historical information is classified based on a plurality of operational modes accumulated for the asset over a selectable period of time;

using the historical information to generate recommended operational settings for each asset so as to increase the performance and operating life of the mobile asset system; and

distributing the operational settings via a global information network.

22. (previously presented) A system for managing a fleet of mobile assets using information indicative of actual usage of each asset, the system comprising:

- a data gathering element configured to collect data regarding each of a plurality of mobile assets;

- a memory device for storing a set of rules comprising relationships for processing the collected data to determine a plurality of operational modes for each asset, each of said operational modes being associated with a distinct level of wear in an asset;

- a processor configured to process the collected data relative to the set of rules to develop historical information regarding actual usage of each mobile asset, the information for said actual usage being arranged so as to list a plurality of operational modes accumulated for the asset over a selectable period of time; and

- a data link in communication with a global information network for distributing information related to the plurality of mobile assets.

23. (previously presented) A system for managing vehicles using information indicative of actual usage of each asset, the system comprising:

a plurality of sensors carried on a vehicle for generating data indicative of the operation of the vehicle;

a memory device carried on said vehicle for storing a set of rules comprising relationships for processing the generated data to determine a plurality of operational modes for each asset, each of said operational modes being associated with a distinct level of wear in an asset;

a processor carried on the vehicle for processing said generated data relative to the set of rules to develop information indicative of the operation of the vehicle for its useful life; and

a transmitter for transmitting said information to a global information network for communication to interested parties.

24. (previously presented) A system for managing vehicles using information indicative of actual usage of each asset, the system comprising:

- a plurality of sensors carried on a vehicle for generating data indicative of the operation of the vehicle;

- a transmitter for transmitting data from the vehicle to a data center;

- a receiver at the data center for receiving data transmitted from the vehicle;

- a memory device at the data center for storing a set of rules comprising relationships for processing data received at the data center to determine a plurality of operational modes for each asset, each of said operational modes being associated with a distinct level of wear in an asset;

- a processor at the data center for processing the received data relative to the set of rules to develop information indicative of the operation of the vehicle over the useful life of the vehicle; and

- a data link at the data center for transferring data indicative of the operation of the vehicle to a global information network for communication to interested parties.



25. (previously presented) A system for managing a vehicle within a fleet of vehicles using information indicative of actual usage of each asset, the system comprising:

- a plurality of sensors carried on a vehicle for generating data indicative of the operation of the vehicle;

- a memory device for gathering and recording operational data for the life of said vehicle;

- a data link in communication with the memory and with a global information network for transferring information relating to the operation of said vehicle to the network;

- a first processor configured to process the operational data relative to a set of rules comprising relationships for processing the operational data to determine a plurality of operational modes for said vehicle, wherein each of said operational modes is associated with a distinct level of wear in a vehicle in order to develop individual historical information regarding actual usage of each vehicle, the information for said actual usage being arranged so as to list the plurality of operational modes of the vehicle; and

- a second processor accessing a data base of fleet historical information data relating to the operation of other vehicles in the fleet corresponding to said vehicle and evaluating the individual historical information for said vehicle in light of said fleet historical information from said other vehicles in the fleet.

26. (previously presented) A computerized method for managing a plurality of mobile assets, the method comprising:

collecting data regarding each of a plurality of mobile assets;

processing the data to develop historical information regarding actual usage of each mobile asset, said actual usage being arranged in a plurality of operational modes of the asset, each of said operational modes being indicative of a respective state of health of said asset;

establishing a cost/benefit evaluation of the mobile asset for a proposed future plan of use in light of the state of health of the mobile asset; and

distributing the information via a global information network.

27. (previously presented) The method of claim 26 further comprising determining a service recommendation for each respective mobile asset based on the actual usage of said respective mobile asset.

28. (previously presented) The method of claim 26 wherein said economic value of each respective mobile asset is further based on whether any service recommendations for the asset have been complied with.

29. (previously presented) The method of claim 27 further comprising predicting faults likely to occur based on whether any service recommendations for the asset have been disregarded.

30. (previously presented) A computerized method for managing a plurality of mobile assets, the method comprising:

collecting data regarding each of a plurality of mobile assets having warranties covering the operation of the mobile assets;

processing the data to develop historical information regarding actual usage of each mobile asset, said actual usage being arranged in a plurality of operational modes of the asset;

determining the remaining warranty coverage of each respective mobile asset based on the actual usage of the asset; and

distributing the information via a global information network.

31. (previously presented) The method of claim 30 wherein said warranty coverage determining step comprises adjusting said coverage based on whether any service recommendations for the asset have been complied with.

32-36 (cancelled)

37. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the mobile assets are railroad locomotives.

38-39. (cancelled)

40. (previously presented) The method of claim 20 wherein the mobile assets are railroad locomotives.

41. (previously presented) The method of claim 21 wherein the mobile assets are railroad locomotives.

42. (previously presented) The system of claim 22 wherein the mobile assets are railroad locomotives.

43. (previously presented) The system of claim 23 wherein the vehicles are railroad locomotives.

44. (previously presented) The system of claim 24 wherein the vehicles are railroad locomotives.

45. (previously presented) The system of claim 25 wherein the vehicles are railroad locomotives.

46. (previously presented) The system of claim 26 wherein the vehicles are railroad locomotives.

47. (previously presented) The method of claim 30 wherein the mobile assets are railroad locomotives.